

Hispanics/Latinos: Help Control a Growing Epidemic by Managing the ABCs of Diabetes

by the National Diabetes Education Program



Cherished family recipes, traditions, and core values are often passed down from generation to generation within the Hispanic/Latino community. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is urging Hispanics/Latinos with diabetes to also share this message with loved ones: together we can and must take action to control the growing diabetes epidemic. NDEP's action plan encourages Hispanics/Latinos to manage the **ABCs of diabetes** – **A**1C, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol – to lower their risk for cardiovascular disease and other diabetes complications to not only improve their health, but also to improve the health of future generations.

Almost 2.5 million Hispanics/Latinos (almost 10 percent) have diabetes in the United States. Mexican Americans, the largest Hispanic/Latino subgroup, are almost twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites. By the year 2050, two out of five Hispanic/Latino youth and one in two female Hispanic/Latina youth born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes. About 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease and stroke. In fact, adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease or suffer a stroke than adults without diabetes.

But, there's hope. Hispanics/Latinos with diabetes can learn to manage the ABCs of diabetes and cut their risk for heart attack and stroke by more than half by following NDEP's action plan and working toward a healthy future.

Know your diabetes ABC numbers. Ask your health care team what your A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers are; what they should be; and what you can do to reach your targets. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose level over the past three months. Have your A1C checked at least twice a year. The goal for most people with diabetes is an A1C below 7. Have your blood pressure checked at each doctor's visit because high blood pressure can make your heart work too hard. The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 130/80. LDL, or bad cholesterol, builds up and clogs your arteries. Have your doctor check your cholesterol at least once a year. The LDL goal for most people is less than 100.

Keep your diabetes ABCs under control. Eat smaller portions of high-fat and high-calorie foods. Eat more fruit for fiber, select a mix of colorful vegetables, choose lean meats or poultry, or choose low-fat or fat-free cheese. Drink water or low-fat or fat-free milk. Get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Stay at a healthy weight by following your diabetes food plan and moving more. Set goals you can reach and break a big goal into small steps. Stay on track by using NDEP's *Tips to Help You Feel Better and Stay Healthy* tip sheet or its Spanish-language adaptation, *Consejos para ayudarlo a sentirse mejor y a mantenerse saludable*. See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early.

In the short run, you can feel better, stay healthy, and have more energy. In the long run, you can reduce your risk for heart attack and stroke, eye, kidney, or nerve disease – and help stop the diabetes epidemic within your community. For free information on diabetes for Hispanics/Latinos, or about managing the ABCs of diabetes, contact NDEP at <http://www.ndep.nih.gov> or call 1-800-438-5383 to speak to someone in English or Spanish. Learn more through NDEP's *Tips to Help You Feel Better and Stay Healthy* tip sheet, *4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* brochure, and many other *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign materials in English or Spanish.

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